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of the coalition between Fox and North, and of how the British Whigs helped our cause. Again, in describing the origin of our presidential office, he makes a lucid explanation of a curious blunder of the "fathers" in copying what is known as the "literary theory" of the English constitution instead of its actual law at the time. Owing to their lack of appreciation of the changes which had been wrought in the English constitution during the hundred years previous, they failed to see that George III was an exceptional political phenomenon. As a result, their creation of an executive is almost entirely different from what they intended.

FREDERIC BANCROFT.

An Introduction to the Local Constitutional History of the United States. By GEORGE E. HOWARD, Professor of History in the University of Nebraska. Vol. I: *Development of the Township, Hundred and Shire.* Baltimore, Publication Agency of the Johns Hopkins University, 1889. — 8vo, xv, 526 pp.

Professor Howard's book gives us a summary and comparison of the work already done on the subject of local institutions under the auspices of the Johns Hopkins university and laid before the public in the *Studies in Historical and Political Science*, of which this is the fourth "extra volume." It would not, however, be just to describe it as simply a summary. For, notwithstanding the large amount and the minute character of the work done on these lines by the Johns Hopkins university, the whole ground has by no means been covered. Professor Howard has therefore been obliged to make original investigations, especially in the Middle and Western states. He has further believed it to be necessary — somewhat in the manner of those historians satirized by Diedrich Knickerbocker in his history of New York — to go back as far as the times of the Cyclops as described by Homer, and to describe in some detail the Greek *phratría* and the Roman *curia*, to say nothing of the primitive *gau* of our German ancestors and the *tunsceipe* of our Anglo-Saxon fathers. In one case he even goes so far afield as to devote several pages to the Iroquois brotherhood with all their phratries and gentes. As attempts to throw light on the organization of primitive society, such researches are interesting and valuable; but as explanatory of local institutions in the United States they seem to be practically useless. The Greek and Roman institutions have had, it may safely be said, no appreciable influence on our form of local government; the purely German almost as little; while all English influence dates from long after the Norman conquest. Few of the characteristics of Saxon administration were to be found in the system which our fathers borrowed from the

land of their birth ; and the changes which they made in that system were rather the result of the more primitive and democratic character of colonial society than a revival of either German or Anglo-Saxon institutions. The American system of local government was simply an Americanized copy of the English system of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On this account it is useless, in describing its history, to go back much further than the time at which it was adopted ; while it is certainly out of place to give a prominent position to the German governmental organization at the time of Cæsar or even of Tacitus. The result of such a method of presenting the history of American local government is the waste of a great amount of space and the overburdening of the attention and patience of the student.

Still, if one will pass hurriedly over these antiquarian researches and dwell only on the real body of the work, one will find that Professor Howard has collected an immense mass of most valuable material and has arranged and presented it in an unusually logical and readable form. Professor Howard is a careful student and a clear writer. In almost all cases, too, he is accurate in the statements which he makes ; and for this accuracy he deserves great credit, since he has covered in this book a vast amount of ground. The great number of details with which he has had to acquaint himself probably accounts for the presence of those few mistakes which are to be found. The following are the only important errors which I have noticed. In describing the English parish, Professor Howard speaks (on page 37) of the parish constable as an elective officer. Gneist speaks of the constable as appointed usually by the justices. Again (on page 310) the statement is made that the sheriff has, throughout the whole of English history, been an appointed lieutenant of the crown. This is not strictly true ; in the time of Edward II it was attempted to make the sheriff an elective officer, but the experiment was unsuccessful and return was made to the old method of filling the office by appointment. In another place (page 110) Professor Howard says, in describing the New York town, that in 1703 "a law was passed which marks an important epoch in the history of English institutions," for by it was established the elective office of supervisor. The law which really marks this epoch was passed in 1691 and not in 1703. It was repealed in 1701, when the office of supervisor was abolished and return was made to the old system of county government by the appointed justices of the peace. This was, however, so unsatisfactory to the people, after their taste of popular county government, that by the law of 1703 the elective system was revived and has remained up to the present time. The mistake is, however, quite natural ; for the edition of the New York laws which Professor Howard has followed (*viz.* Van Schaack's) does not contain either the law of 1691 or that of

1701, but the law of 1703 only, which was in force when the compilation was made. The two earlier laws may be found in another edition of the laws of New York, which includes the laws from 1691-1718.

The matter is not, however, a vital one ; nor are any of the mistakes which I have discovered of sufficient importance to detract seriously from the value of Professor Howard's contribution to the literature of American administration. How wofully meagre that literature is, any one who has made any study of the subject well knows. This book is not only a valuable contribution to that literature, but it has also the distinction of being the first serious attempt to give a complete picture of the growth and development of our local institutions — institutions more important in the United States than in almost any other country on account of the very decentralized character of our government.

The usefulness of the book is greatly increased by a very full index, and by a list of "authorities cited" which amounts to an excellent bibliography of the subject.

F. J. GOODNOW.

Road Legislation for the American State. By JEREMIAH W. JENKS, Professor of Political Science, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. Publications of the American Economic Association, Vol. V, No. 3 (May, 1889). — 83 pp. and Tables.

Professor Jenks has done well in giving voice to the increased interest now manifested in the improvement of our public roads. At last it seems to be dawning upon the more intelligent of our country people that one of the greatest burdens they have to bear is the cost of getting their produce upon the nearest railroad or canal. In many respects it is remarkable that this important topic has attracted so little attention ; yet after all it is no exception to the general rule which public interest follows. As our sympathies are more easily aroused by the wrongs of the Chinese or the Indian than by the sufferings of the poor in our own cities and villages, so the tariff or the national surplus attracts the farmer's eye more readily than the loss he sustains from the miserable condition of the road over which he daily travels. Nor is he more short-sighted than many of those who would educate him. We have a plenty of those who spend their time and money in teaching the farmer to see the burden of a fifty per cent duty upon leather ; but who is willing to do the same to make him understand that because of poor roads his harness contains four times the leather it ought to have to draw the load ?

The economic loss of the nation through the present condition of our roads is clearly presented by Professor Jenks, yet every one familiar with country life will say that he has been very moderate in his estimates.